MSG From: IBMPC   --YKTVMV   To: IT32730 --VIMVMOA   02/17/93 20:54:16á
==========
----- SPACE FORUM appended at 19:55:40 on 93/02/17 GMT (by KESLING at LEXVM2) -
Subject: Pluto express

Speaking of planetary science, I highly recommend the cover story in the
latest issue of AW&ST discussing the 'fast' Pluto mission. Really nice
article.
Highlights are basically:
We have a rare opportunity to investigate Pluto while it still has an
atmosphere (close enough to the Sun). Next chance won't be until 2200+

A pair of small (137 kg) spacecraft can be shot on a direct trajectory
to Pluto on a Titan IV/Centaur vehicle w/ transit time of 7 years.
Possibility of using less-capable Proton booster... 12 year transit.

Chance for NASA to use "low-cost" methodology... entire mission cost
USD 1 billion. 750,000 spent in 1992 on the studies.

Although actual 'close encounter' will be extremely brief, we will have
a period of up to three weeks prior where imagery will be better than
Hubble views.

Justification in that Pluto is only planet to remain unvisited. Pluto
approaches perihelion. "Double" planet w/ Charon and some evidence that
Pluto actually exchanges atmospheric gasses with Charon due to their
closeness.

Imaging by 100,000 element CCD. No 'extendable' structures on vehicle.

ftbg dave

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